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REASONS

OF THE

DISSSENT

ENTRED BY

HUGH DALRYMPLE

of DRUMMORE, Esquire, one
of the Senators of the College
of Justice, as ASSESSOR for
Northberwick, in his own, and
the Name of the Commissioners
of the Burghs of *Wigtoun*, *Whit-
horn* and *Stranrawer*, who ad-
hered to the same, and of such
other of the Commissioners then
present, as may yet adhere.

Robt Craig

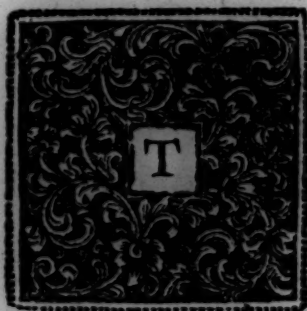


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Reasons of Dissent, &c.



THAT the Reasons of Dissent may be the better understood, it will be proper to premise, that the Convention of Royal Boroughs has but limited Powers. They have, unquestionably, a Right to proportion the respective Quota's of the Land-Tax payable by each particular Borough, and the 10 *L.* of the 100 *L.* (or supposed Total of the Land-Tax imposed upon the whole Boroughs) amongst unfree Traders in Baronies, or Burghs of Barony and Regality, as the Inhabitants thereof happen to accept of the Communication of Trade. They have a Power to take Care of

of the Trade of the Royal Boroughs; and may be allowed to have a Power to consult and deliberate among themselves, upon making proper Applications for obtaining new Laws which concern Trade, or for procuring Alterations in Laws relating to Trade, where such Alterations may be supposed to be useful. It may also be admitted, that the Convention has some Power to regulate the Police of any particular Borough, tho' that has been denied often, and very lately, *by some People, who, perhaps, upon this Occasion, are very willing to consider the Power of not only Conventions, but even their Annual Committees, to be of very great, nay, of illimited Extent.* In short, it may be admitted, that, as to all Matters which relate to Trade, which is, by Law, in a particular Manner, a Property of the Royal Boroughs, with a Power, or, perhaps, a Necessity upon them to communicate their Property to a certain Extent, the Royal Boroughs have not only extensive Privileges, but considerable Powers.

It is the laudable Practice of Conventions of the Royal Boroughs, even in Matters which fall under their Cognizance, to direct certain of their Number to send Missives to the several Boroughs, which

which contain the Heads or Substance of the Matters to come before them, to the End, no doubt, that each Commissioner, as to Matters of Importance, may come instructed and prepared by his Constituents, how he should demean himself; and if, by the Influence of any great Boroughs; or, perhaps, of *one*, sometimes Matters not contained in the Missives have been overhawled, and brought in by Brigue and Surprise, it has justly been complained of by the whole rational World, and should be complained of by none more than the Boroughs, and particularly the lesser Boroughs, it being always to be apprehended, that sudden and irregular Resolutions, of which no previous Notice is given, according to the good old Custom, are more the Effect of Party-Work, and, perhaps, of some dirty Job, than any real Utility, or any Thing meant for the Utility of the State of Boroughs.

THE Power of the City of *Edinburgh* is very great, in calling Conventions *pro re nata*, or of the Annual Committees of such Conventions: Her Welfare must, indeed, be of great Moment to the Boroughs: And this Power, which is somewhat modern (for anciently the Convention itself walkt about, and diffused its Benefits and
happy

happy Influences to several Boroughs, tho' that, by many Years Practice, has been confined to *Edinburgh*) has become so great, probably because *Edinburgh* was the Seat of Government before the Union, because the Parliament was at Hand to sollicite any Thing proposed for the Good of the State of Boroughs, and because the Privy-Council, and great Courts of Judicatory seemed to be fixed there, and, possibly, because of Services the City of *Edinburgh* had done herself and the other Boroughs.

As long as the Power of the City of *Edinburgh* is lodged in the Hands of Men who have the Good of the Boroughs and Nation at Heart, and employ it for that End, it will certainly be needless for other Boroughs to complain; but should it be our Misfortune to see the chief Magistracy of that City fall into the Hands of a Man, more guided by his own Interest, than by the Interest of his City and other Boroughs, it would be Time to look, with some Attention, into the Exercise of that Power, with which, not, properly speaking, the City of *Edinburgh*, but her first Magistrate, is vested, at least, now is, and, for many Years backward, has been: If that Power shall be observed, not to be employed singly for the Benefit of the Boroughs in general,

general, nor the City of *Edinburgh* in particular: If calling upon Conventions, or their Annual Committees, in Appearance, for reasonable Causes, but, in Effect, to carry on the little Politicks of any Party whatever, shall appear to be such a Man's Aim, and shall be attempted to be carried through by Stealth and Surprise: If, by such sly and subdolous Practices, it should ever happen, that considerable Bodies of Men shall be endeavoured to be attacked in their Rights and Privileges, as far as, and farther than the Power of an Annual Committee can go: If Matters of the greatest Moment shall be attempted to be hurried through at one Diet of Convention, and, which is more extraordinary, of an Annual Committee, as to the last of which, it is possible to suppose some Pains may have been taken to have a Meeting packt for the Purpose; Then, indeed, we may safely say, such Power is turned to a most corrupt and pernicious Use, and needs very much to be checked and regulated: And it may justly be feared, such a Man's Power will be employed to intimidate and overawe Boroughs into a servile Compliance with Measures which they are averse to: But, as the Freedom of the State of Boroughs is guarded by the Laws of the
Land;

Land, if they will but attend to their own true Interests, they have Power enough to relieve themselves from the Hands of any Man who dares to attempt to enslave them: And, if the City of *Edinburgh* consults her own Interest, no Burgh will be more foreward to check and regulate such Abuses as she.

UPON the 21 of *February* last, there was a Letter directed to the Boroughs of the annual Committee, upon several Matters, which seem'd to have Reference to Matters of Trade, which the Letter says had been under the annual Committee's Consideration of that Date, to which Particulars is subjoined a general Clause in these Words, *And sundry other Things of the like Importance, that may require an Application to Parliament this Session.* At first reading of this, every Body would imagine, that *the Article of Sundries* was composed of Things of the same Nature, as well as Importance; but it seems a Project was formed to bring two very material Articles, Hand over Head, under the Consideration of the annual Committee. These Articles were contained in a Draught of a Letter prepared by a Sub-Committee, *to wit, Edinburgh*, represented by the *Provost only, and he not a Member; Burnt-*
island,

island, represented by *Provost M^c Aulay* ; *Whithorn*, *Sanquhair* represented by *George Irvine* of *Newtown*, one of the *Town-Clerks* of *Edinburgh*, and *Bervie*. It was discovered and complained of in the Committee, when these two Articles came under Consideration, that neither *Whithorn* nor *Bervie* were acquainted of the Sub-Committee's Diet of Meeting ; and it was specially noticed, that these Articles were therefore, in Effect, the Deed of the Representatives of *Bruntisland* and *Sanquhair* alone. The first mentions, that " the Committee had been informed, that some of the Judges of the supreme Courts here have offered to serve in Parliament at the next Election ; and the Committee being fully perswaded, that, were the Judges of the supreme Courts capable to have Seats in the honourable House of Commons, it would be attended with most pernicious Consequences to this Part of the united Kingdom in general, and to this City, the ancient Metropolis thereof, in particular, which unavoidably, in a little Time, would destroy the whole State of Boroughs, wherefore, as there is now a Bill depending in Parliament, to regulate the Election of Members of Parliament in

“ *Scotland*, if that Bill does not contain
 “ a Clause to disqualifie these Judges from
 “ being elected, it is humbly proposed by
 “ the Committee, that a proper Clause
 “ may be offered to prevent this Evil ef-
 “ fectually.

THE second Article runs thus. “ The
 “ Committee being likewise informed, that
 “ Endeavours are here used to promote
 “ Applications to the Parliament for re-
 “ scinding the Act establishing a Septen-
 “ nial Parliament, and for introducing a
 “ Triennial one ; and the Committee be-
 “ ing fully convinced, that such an Alte-
 “ ration cannot be attended with any Be-
 “ nefit, but must be followed with evil
 “ Consequences, *namely*, to the State of
 “ Boroughs, do, in the most earnest Man-
 “ ner, request that you will join in oppo-
 “ sing the same.

THE first Article being dropt, makes no
 Part of the Subject of this Dissent ; but the
 Second being agreed to, and my Dissent
 being offered and admitted, and to be re-
 corded, I offer, in my own Name, and the
 Name of those who did or shall adhere to
 me, the following Reasons of Dissent.

FIRST, Because, supposing for Argu-
 ment's Sake, that the Convention itself
 had Power to take such Matters under
their

their Consideration, (which we think they, and, *a fortiori*, their annual Committee, have not) it was at least proper that Matters of such great Consequence should have been specially mentioned in the Missive directed to the Members of the annual Committee. Had that been done, it had been reasonable to expect the Committee had been full; but that would have marr'd the whole Project. The *Dependents* of the City of *Edinburgh*, the far greater Part of whom, there is but too much Cause to think, for obvious Reasons, are but too willing to concur in any Party-Job, must then have been less significant: It was therefore proper, that the Matter should not be so explained, as to make the Committee full; and therefore these two most *important* Articles were wrapt up in *general* Terms; and it is a known and just Maxim, that *Dolus latet in generalibus*. The Letter itself imports, that some Matters, of the same Nature and Importance, were to be under Consideration; and every Body will be of Opinion, that has the least Degree of Impartiality, that the Matter of these two Articles was quite different from the Particulars mentioned in the Missive; but it was proper, to carry on the Job, to couch these in the most general Terms.

Terms. And this shameful Practice I take to be most hurtful to the State of the Boroughs. For, in the first Place, if, under the Pretence of such general Words, Matters of the highest Consequence are pretended to be warrantably taken under Consideration, and Resolutions to be framed upon them, there is indeed no Occasion for a Missive at all, neither to Conventions nor annual Committees, upon Emergencies of Affairs which affect the Trade of the Boroughs; all Matters of Importance must rest in the Breast of the Provost of *Edinburgh*, and such as he may call to his Assistance; he and they need only to frame a Missive, mentioning a few Particulars, which Members of an annual Committee may think of so common Concern, as may be left to his and their Management, and leave any Thing of Importance to come, as naturally they ought, certainly, *per saltum*, and by Surprise: But it must be of most dangerous Consequence to the State of Boroughs, if, under such general and fraudulent Words, Matters of the greatest Importance, whether directly concerning the Trade and State of the Boroughs, or Things quite distinct (and which only, by remotest Consequences and strain'd Inferences, it can be pretended do affect them)

them) can be, by short Hand, brought in and considered, and Resolutions taken upon them. And this, it is hop'd, the Boroughs, so soon as they have a proper Opportunity, will duly advert to.

SECONDLY, Because, in my Opinion, the annual Committee had no Power to consider of the Matter contained in the Article, altho' it had been specially mentioned in the Missive, because the Committee had no Power to make it the Head of a Missive. The Committee has only certain Powers committed to them, of which it cannot be supposed to be one, that It should watch over the Legislative, and take upon them, before Hand, to judge of, or, in the Words of some of the Committee, to give their Sense of Matters of such high Importance, which, by the Article, is plain the Committee thought were to come before the Parliament. It is a Principle of common Sense, as well as of Law, That one Person, or a Number of Persons, delegated or commissioned by others, to do a certain Thing or Things, have no Power, no Authority, to meet in the Name of their Constituents, and to transact other Things than those which were specially delegated or commissioned. Matters of Trade are indeed specially committed to the annual Com-

Committee, and probably such Heads of the Missive as were left unfinished by the Convention itself; but surely Matters of State, the Utility of this or the other Act of Parliament, which, by the greatest Torture, cannot be brought to have the least Concern with Trade, the State of the Boroughs, or any Thing committed to the annual Committee, lay quite out of their Sphere; they had nothing to do with them. It was nothing to the Purpose, that the Alteration of the Septennial Act might affect the State of Boroughs, or did affect them, or the Elections in which they were concerned. So does every Bill, more or less, that is intended for enacting a new Law, or repealing an old, useless, or perhaps hurtful one; but it will not from thence follow, That the annual Committee of the Convention have a Right to take every Bill brought into Parliament into Consideration, to give their Sense of it; and to pretend to instruct or request the Members of Parliament representing the Boroughs, to concur with, or oppose the passing of such Bills, as in their Opinion are advantageous, or hurtful. That is a Piece of the highest Arrogance and Presumption in the general, and in a singular Manner injurious to the particular Boroughs, who alone have

Power

Power to correspond with or instruct their several Members of Parliament: But to shew, beyond the Power of Cavil, that the Committee had no Authority to take Matters of this Sort under their Cognizance, their Instructions from the Convention are conceived in these Words. *Edinburgh, 5 July, 1733. The which Day, the Convention appoints the Commissioners for the Burgh of Edinburgh, &c. as a Committee, to sit, after dissolving this present Convention, to consider what is remitted to them, and particularly to consider every Thing relating to Trade, the unfree Traders, the Staple, and Transgressors thereof, and to adjust and determine in all Differences that have arisen, or may arise amongst any of the Royal Boroughs, betwixt and the next annual Convention; and to consider the Circumstances of the unfree Trade, compound, transact, and agree with such of the Burghs of Barony and Regality, and other unfree Traders as are willing to accept of the Communication of Trade, and to use Endeavours to make such as have accepted of the Communication effectual; and the Convention recommend to them to meet frequently, and declare, that Three of the Committee shall be a Quorum for unfree Trade, and Five for all the other Business.*

Business committed to them, Edinburgh being always one.

I want to know, under what Head of these Instructions this Power of judging of such Matters comes to be class'd; and I submit it to the Royal Boroughs, if it is not monstrous to suppose, so valuable and important Things, as these contained in the Article now under Consideration, can be supposed to be remitted to the Consideration of the Whole, much less to that of any Five of that Committee.

THIRDLY, Because, no Letter that may be written, no Instruction that can be given by this Committee, can or ought to be regarded by any Member of Parliament. The Members who represent the Boroughs in Parliament, have nothing to do with the Convention itself, far less with their annual Committee; neither the Convention, nor annual Committee, can declare the Sense of the Boroughs, with respect to any publick Matter; and tho' the Plan of the Job was first to declare the Committee's Opinion in a Thing they had nothing to do with, to lead or rather mislead the Boroughs to give the same Opinion, yet, as there is great Reason to think, that the Magistracies and Councils of the several Boroughs, are not led nor directed with the same

same corrupt Views that some People are, they will not, it is hoped, suffer themselves to be made a Job of, but declare their own Opinions upon such Matters, which, if they should do, the Opinion of the Committee must surely go for nothing, except to stand an Example of a Piece of very great Presumption, in pretending to give their Opinion for others, from whom they have no Sort of Commission to act in such Matters. Besides, as it must pour Contempt upon the Committee, should the particular Boroughs give contrary Advice or Instructions to their Members of Parliament; and, as it was admitted in the Argument, that not as representing the Boroughs, nor in their Name, but in their own, and, as single Men, the Committee were to give their Opinion, as for themselves, and not for their Boroughs. And, as it was admitted, That the Opinion of the respective Boroughs must prevail over, and set at nought any Opinion that could be given by this Committee, these Things were undeniable Proofs, not only of Want of Power of any Sort in the Committee to take upon them to act in such Matters; but also, that nothing else was intended, than, by way of Party-Job, to try, by the Authority of the Committee, to impose up-
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on the several Boroughs, to follow an Example the Committee had no Power to set before them, which I take to be a high Affront and Indignity done to each particular Borough; and what must bring the annual Committee to be quite useless to the Royal Boroughs; which must be the Case, so soon as it appears, (as by this Transaction it does) that Meetings are packt, and Jobs set on Foot, more to recommend the Usefulness of some one Man or other to a Party, than to follow out, with Singleness and Integrity, the true Interest of the Royal Boroughs; and, as a compleat Evidence of this, the other Article, tho' dropt, shall just be mentioned.

THE Magistrates of *Edinburgh* have, upon many Occasions, shewn Abundance of Respect to the Lords of Session; they have always desired to be in a good Correspondence with them; these Magistrates never once have attempted to strike at any Thing that lookt like a Privilege belonging to the Lords, without, at least, previously consulting with them: Former Magistracies thought it prudent to use the Lords with Discretion, to be well with them, and even to support their Interest. By the Date of the Letter to the Members of the Committee, it is plain there

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was Access to state any Thing to the Lords that concerned them personally ; but, upon this Occasion, it is believed the Inhabitants of that City cannot take it well, if, by any of their Magistrates, or Servants, or by their Procurement, an Article should be form'd, recommending it to the Representatives of the Boroughs, to promote a Clause in an Act of Parliament, to disqualify the Judges of our supreme Courts from sitting in the House of Commons. This was only levelled at the Lords of Session, and particularly at one of them ; this unmannerly Project was carried on with such Secrecy, that by mere Accident it came to be discovered ; perhaps it might be discovered to some, but there were, besides, many of the Lords in or near Town, who got not the least Hint of it. I, tho Assessor to the Commissioner for the Borough of *North-Berwick*, and tho it was well known I was in Town, was neglected, even as a Member, to be acquainted of the Meeting ; it was enough I was told from the Chair, that the Missive had been sent to the Borough, tho, with Respect to others, perhaps, more Care was taken to have them attend. This Proceeding, against a Body of such Consideration, at Hand, but not acquaint-
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ed with what was a-doing, is, at the same Time, that it shews the utmost Disrespect, so plain a Proof of a Job of shameful Work, that I apprehend the Royal Boroughs have every Thing to fear from Men, who do not scruple so boldly ; so boldly, did I say, no, so insidiously and presumptuously to invade the Rights of other Men, of great Figure and Consideration, and to do what they can to have them stript of them, without so much as giving those, whom they were bound both to honour and respect, the least Warning that their Rights were to be attackt, which, were it for my Purpose in this present Dissent, I could maintain to be very well founded, and that there is not one Judge of the united Kingdom, (not summoned to attend a Service inconsistent with that of the House of Commons) who has not the common Privilege of serving his Country in it ; and whoever was to shew his Party-Zeal against the whole Court of Session, for the Sake of one Man of great Merit, surely it ill, very ill, became the Lord Provost of *Edinburgh*, to lead up a Dance of that Sort : But as this was a Part of the Job, it is a full Proof of the Spirit which has carried through the other Article ; and I do submit

mit it to the Consideration of the Royal Boroughs, and the World, if their Power and Authority is not employed and used to most noble and excellent Purposes.

4thly. BECAUSE when it was carried by the Majority of a single Vote, that the Committee should proceed to consider of the Article touching the Duration of Parliaments, I did propose, that the Matter might be sub-committed, for which there was the more Reason, that tho' one of the Sub-Committee, formerly named, had taken upon him, without so much as conferring with the other Members, to prepare a Draught of this Part of a Letter to be wrote to Members of Parliament; yet the Affair was plainly of such Consequence, that it required to be deliberately talkt to. I represented, that if such a Thing came before any of the Houses of Parliament, as a Repeal of the Septennial Act, it would be agreeable to their wise Method of Procedure, to commit it even to a Committee of the whole House; that it could not pass into a Law, without being thrice read in both Houses; I was seconded in this Motion, but no Attention was given to a reasonable Proposal of that Kind; the Majority of the Committee were either so well prepared to go on, and to finish their

their Job, or were so clear-sighted, that, at once, they could balance all the Conveniencies and Inconveniencies, all the Advantages and Disadvantages, that could possibly attend the Law, its standing either the one Way or other ; and, to be sure, there could be no Doubt, but that Gentlemen of their Penetration, could comprehend all Things in the Twinkling of an Eye ; nor could there be the least Reason to doubt of their great Capacity, in rightly judging of them. This, however, I take to be a Thing altogether unprecedented by the Practice of the Royal Boroughs, or any other well governed Society, with so much Impetuosity and Precipitancy to proceed to determine in Matters of the highest Importance, and, in this, directly contrary to what had been done by the same Committee at their former Meeting, which sub-committed it. It was not pretended, that the Sub-Committee had once met upon it, tho' it may be true, that there had been some overly Conversation upon the Head, in a greater Company, at Dinner ; wherefore, as it was the highest Arrogance, and something near to Falshood, in one Man of the Sub-Committee, to draw up this Article by Way of a Report of the Sub-Committee ; it was precipitant and unjust to take such a Thing

Thing into Consideration, without submitting it; but that might have delayed the Job one Post, and all this was therefore most reasonably flurred over.

5thly. BECAUSE, supposing the Annual Committee had had Power, as it had not, to meddle in such Matters; and supposing the Report of the Sub-Committee had been regularly made, as it was not; Was any Opinion to have been given upon the Matter by the Committee, it was their Duty to have required the Members of Parliament, representing the Boroughs, with Vigour and Spirit to have concurred with and supported any Bill which might be brought in to restore the Frequency of new Parliaments, by making them Triennial. Because, in the first Place, calling new Parliaments, at least once in the three Years, is most agreeable to our Constitution, and indeed of this there needs no better nor convincing Proof, than the Article of our Claim of Right, and of the *English* Bill of Rights; in both of which, it is mentioned as a Right of the Subject, (and consequently a valuable Part of the Constitution) *as what would tend to redress Grievances, to amend, strengthen, and preserve the Laws, that Parliaments should be frequently called.* And, among other

other Things, they insisted on this *as their undoubted Right and Privilege, and that no Declaration, Judgment, Doings or Proceedings, to the Prejudice of the People, in any of the Premises, (the last of which is the Article I now insist upon) ought in any ways be drawn hereafter, in Consequence or Example.* These are, Word for Word, what both Nations, now united, did at that Time insist upon.

If we shall look back into History, we shall find, that anciently Parliaments were Annual; and it is pretty certain, that, till the Reign of *Henry the VIII. of England*, a Prince who did shew no small Appetite for arbitrary Power, and whose Reign was indeed violent, there is not one Instance to be found of the Prorogation of one Parliament.

THE Length of Parliaments, or the not calling them at all, was loudly complained of in some Reigns that preceeded the happy Revolution. Many Attempts, without Success, were made to establish Triennial Parliaments, at last, at the happy Revolution, the above mentioned Article of Right was claimed, insisted upon, and admitted as one of the Fundamentals which composed its Basis.

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NOTWITHSTANDING of this, not for five or six Years after it, indeed to the great Disappointment of the Nation, by the Influence of Ministers, whose Interest alone it was to ward off so just and expected a Thing, an Act was past, by which it was provided, That a new Parliament should be called once in three Years. And this most valuable Law, as it was looked upon as the great and chief Barrier of the Liberties and Rights of the People, continued unshaken for the Space of Thirty Years ; during which Time it is impossible to condescend upon any one bad Consequence or ill Effect it produced.

I have said, that it was the Interest of the Ministers for the Time, alone, that so long prevented the enacting so just and valuable a Law, and what the Nation so reasonably expected, as most agreeable to the Constitution, and necessary to support it ; and no doubt every Minister will endeavour to have the same Parliament, to sit and continue as long as he can. In a short Time, it is not easy for a Minister to seduce the Representatives of the People, who are chosen to be, and ought to be *the Guardians of their Liberties*, nor to prevail upon them, for little Advantages to themselves, to falsify their Trust, and to turn their cruel and polluted Hands against the Country which
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they ought to protect and defend ; but Length of Time, with the constant Wiles and Arts of an insinuating designing Minister, may possibly bring a Parliament to be at his Devotion, and then, indeed, there will be the greatest Reason to apprehend that the Liberties of the People are in the utmost Hazard. If it should be our Case, that a Parliament should become obsequious to a haughty, designing, imperious Minister, which there would be still the greater Reason to apprehend if the Parliament should be allowed to sit for a *long Period*, we must be exceeding miserable ; and therefore, since I am forced to give my Opinion upon a Subject which, I think, this Committee has nothing to do with, I cannot but think it of the greatest Consequence to the Nation, that there should be a frequent Return of the Time, when the Electors have a Right to enquire into the Conduct of the Elected, and to canvass their Proceedings in Parliament, so far as rightly to direct themselves to a Choice of those who love our Constitution.

BESIDES, it is at least supposable, that a Ministry, by giving Pensions and Employments to some, and cajoling others with the Hopes and Expectations of them, by corrupting of Electors and returning Officers, may secure to his Obedience, perhaps,

haps, a Majority of one of the Houses of Parliament, at the very Entry upon a new Parliament; and, to encrease his Party, by such Helps as every Body knows are in a Minister's Power: If that should at any Time happen to be our miserable Case, what Hopes could we entertain of seeing the Parliament exert themselves in protecting the Country? We should have greater Reason to fear, even the Parliament it self might become the Tools of Oppression in the Hands of such a Ministry. And, instead of being the Terror of evil Ministers, we might expect to see them the Ministry's obsequious Agents, and be more apt to pull down an honest Man, that dared to stem the Tide of Oppression and Wickedness, than to stand up for the Rights and Liberties of the People. We might expect to hear such Men, call those that were ready to give up what was most valuable to the Country, *the true Friends of our Constitution*; and call those, who had Courage to assert their Country's Cause, Jacobites and Republicans. Now, it is to be hoped, that every Body will agree, that no heavier Curse could fall on any People, than to have such a Parliament; and to have it entailed upon them.

It is very true, that, under the Reign of our present most gracious Sovereign, we
may

may hope, that none of these Evils shall befall us. Nor had the Nation any Reason to apprehend the like Danger under the Reign of our great Deliverer King *William*. It is a Matter that is quite indifferent to the Prince, whether Parliaments are of longer or shorter Duration. It is the Interest and Duty of Parliaments to provide for the Safety, Honour and Dignity of their Prince in all Respects. If they fail in that, they fail in their Duty, not to him only, but to themselves. No Sovereign was supported with greater Lustre, than the late Queen was, by triennial Parliaments. But should it ever be a Question, between the Prince and the People (a Thing that most certainly cannot now happen) whether Parliaments should be longer or shorter lived, it is impossible to hesitate one Moment, to which Side a Man of sound Revolution-Principles should incline. But as it cannot always be supposed, that, we shall be happy enough to have good and wise Princes to rule us; and, as it is possible, a very good and wise Prince may be unlucky enough to have a corrupt and designing Minister, it is the Business of every Man, who has, or imagines he has, Power to give his Opinion in publick Matters, to direct his Vews, to have our Constitution brought back

back to its former State, by reviving the Act which established Triennial Parliaments, which most certainly is most conducive to the true Interest of the Nation. Seven Years are, to the Bulk of Mankind, as good as a Term for Life, and that every Body must allow is too long a Term of Endurance for Parliaments.

It is true, That, in the Reign of King *George* the First, the Triennial Act was repealed, and a Septennial Act was made : But we can remember, that it was a Necessity of State, the then Condition of the Island, a Rebellion lately extinguished, and the Hazard there might be of allowing of great Assemblies of Men to meet, before these Animosities, which had thrown us into the Convulsions of a civil War, were quite abated, which were given as Reasons for this most material Alteration of our Constitution. — At present, we enjoy a perfect calm Peace at Home, there are no open Enemies within our Borders, pretending or daring to disturb our present happy Tranquillity ; and if these Reasons, which were temporary, do now subsist no more, as surely they do not, since the Cause of that material Change has ceased, the Effect ought also to cease, and our Constitution ought to be put into the same Condition, in which it had remained, but
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for Reasons of State, for which at present, God be thanked, there is not the least Pretence.

NOR will this Observation, that Matters of Election embroil even Friends, and make them differ so among themselves, wherefore, said one Gentleman, I'd rather wish to see the Parliament *Dodecennial*, nor that other Observation, made by another Gentleman, that *Triennial Parliaments* turned the People of Boroughs idle, and diverted them too much from their Business, be of the least Consequence to avoid the Force of the preceeding Observations, the Substance of which was mentioned to the Committee; because to this it was answered, that if the *Triennial Act* was so great a Fence and Barrier of our Liberties, if any Gentleman thought the entertaining the Burghers of a Town, perhaps for a Fortnight, once a Three Years, occasioned such a Diversion as to overbalance all the Advantages of it, he must have so mean and contemptible a Notion of the Value of the Constitution, and of the Liberty of the Subject, secured by it, that it did not deserve an Answer: Nor can a Judgment, founded upon such a trifling Observation, in Answer to Arguments which have been ever looked upon as of the greatest Weight, I hope, go far with any.

AND

AND as to the Divisions which the Return of Elections create among Friends, it is my Opinion, that the more frequent the Return, the fewer Squabbles there will be, either among them or others, upon that Score. No Man would think it extreme much worth his While to throw out great Sums to secure the Seat of one single Year in Parliament; but, in Proportion to the Length of Parliaments, do Men set a Value upon a Seat. *Hinc illæ Lachrymæ!* A Disappointment of a Seat, for which one has a fresh Chance in three Years, may, by Computation, be born with thrice as much Ease as a Disappointment for seven Years: And most People, to gratify their Ambition, or their prevailing Passion, will give their Money in Proportion to the Disappointment they dread, and shew their Repentment, Revenge, or whatever else moves them, just in the same Proportion: Whence it follows as a Demonstration, to me, that the longer lived Parliaments are, the greater the Struggle will be, and the more Animosities it will raise. It will be admitted by the Gentleman, that what he means has been occasioned about the Elections for a *Septennial Parliament*; and, perhaps, the Length of a Seven Years Parliament, is a strong Reason why one should not even trust his Blood-Friend in Parliament, if

it is his sincere Opinion that he has done a^miss : But nothing could be more absurd, than for any one Member to form his Notions of what concerns the whole Island, from one, or a very few more Instances of that Sort, which neither do, nor possibly can affect the Constitution. But the Argument does not stop here ; for if it is true, that Elections do throw a Borough idle, if it is true, that they divide Friends, and that therefore Parliaments should be called seldomer than once in three Years, to be sure, the seldomer the better, let us therefore agree to make Parliaments Perennial, and all further Trouble will be saved, at least, People must be idle, and quarrel about something else than Elections.

I am extrême sensible, a great deal more might be said, to very good Purpose, but as it is impossible to contract what has been the Subject of many learned Debates, within a narrow Compass ; and being convinced this Paper has swell'd into too great a Bulk ; and, in Cases of this Kind, it being allowed to add, what may further be necessary upon any proper Occasion, which, I do insist may be reserved to me, I choose to go no farther at this Time.

Signed, HEW DALRYMPLE
for Northberwick.

SEDERUNT of the **ANNUAL COMMITTEE**, and the Manner they voted, by which it is plain the Great Boroughs present by their Commissioners voted against the Motion, and for Triennial Parliaments.

There were Two Votes, one, Proceed now to consider of it? or, Delay?

P R O C E E D,

Rutherglen, Mr. James Bogle, Secretary to the Royal Bank.

Kirkaldie.

Burntisland, Lord Conservator of the Scots Privileges in the *Netherlands*, Assessor.

Inverary, The Comptroller to the Post-Office, and Depute-Keeper of the Register for Hornings, &c.

Dysart.

Kinghorn, One of those, 'tis likely, who bound himself by Bond to vote plum in the Elections of that Burgh, last Election.

Innerkeithing.

Tayne, One of the Commissioners of the Customs.

Sanquhair, Clerk to the Town of *Edinburgh*, (one of them) and to the Royal Boroughs.

Dumfermling, No Counsellor of the Burgh; nor Office-Bearer of the Burgh.

Elgin, No Counsellor, nor Office-Bearer of the Burgh.

D E L A Y.

Perth, Burgher thereof.

Linlithgow, Burgher thereof.

Bercie, Provost of it.

Stranrawer, Advocate, and one of the Assessors to the Town of *Edinburgh*.

Dingwal, Clerk-Depute to the Admiralty, in the Gift of the Principal Clerk.

Wigtoun, a Gentleman living in Town.

Northberwick, a Lord of Session.

Whithorn, a considerable Merchant in *Edinburgh*.

Irvine, One of the Under Clerks of *Edinburgh*.

The other Vote was, Approve of the Motion? or, Not?

A P P R O V E,

Members voted as on *Proceed*.

N O T,

Members voted as on *Delay*, except *Bervie* and *Irvine*, who were not clear to vote.

Lord Provost of *Edinburgh*
in the Chair, NO Member
of the Committee, and NO
Member for *Edinburgh*
present.

F I N I S.

[8]

The first of the several Reports of the
Committee on the

APPROVAL

Members voted as on

NOT

Members voted as on the
first and second, who were not
clear to vote.

Lord Provost of Edinburgh
in the Chair, NOMINATED
of the Committee, and NO
Member for Edinburgh
present.

6 AP 58

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